



Our ref: 536089/1; AG/11/00226

Your ref: Petitions

Office of the  
Deputy Premier and Attorney General  
Minister for Local Government  
and Special Minister of State

21 MAR 2011

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House,  
Corner Alice and George Streets  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 22 February 2011 regarding petition number 1621-11, tabled in Parliament on 17 February 2011. The petition relates to the issue of civil unions and same sex marriage and the petitioners' *"request the House to reject the passing of a Bill to accept these issues"*.

I note that there is currently no Bill before the Queensland Parliament which relates to civil unions or marriage for same sex couples.

The issue of marriage for people in same sex relationships is not within the responsibility of the Queensland Parliament. The *Marriage Act 1961* (Cth) stipulates that a marriage can only occur between a man and a woman. This Act would need to change for same sex marriages to be legal. The power to amend the *Marriage Act 1961* (Cth) is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government by virtue of the Constitution of Australia. Accordingly, marriage for same sex couples is a matter for consideration and debate by the Commonwealth Parliament.

However, the introduction of a scheme for civil unions is a matter within state and territory governments' jurisdiction. A civil union or partnership is a legally recognised relationship which has a registration process and an accompanying ceremony.

In Australia, civil unions are currently available in the Australian Capital Territory, and relationship registers exist in Tasmania, New South Wales and Victoria. Relationship registers differ from civil unions in that it is a process that allows people to register their relationship with the appropriate body but with no ceremony.

Level 12 Executive Building  
100 George Street Brisbane 4000  
PO Box 15009 City East  
Queensland 4002 Australia  
Telephone +61 7 3224 4600  
Facsimile +61 7 3224 4781  
Email [deputypremier@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:deputypremier@ministerial.qld.gov.au)  
ABN 65 959 415 158

To date, the Queensland Government has not made any commitments about introducing a scheme for civil unions in Queensland. Any decision on this important issue would involve careful consideration of the diverse views of the Queensland community.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Lucas', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**PAUL LUCAS MP**  
**Deputy Premier and Attorney-General,**  
**Minister for Local Government**  
**and Special Minister of State**